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**An Empirical Study of Acculturation of
Mainland Chinese in Hong Kong**

Du Juan
Hong Kong Baptist University

Juan Du, Ph.D. student of school of communication studies, Hong Kong Baptist University. She received her BA and Mphil degrees in Peking University. She has presented research papers on several international academic conferences, e.g., the Fifth International Conference of Media & Communication in Chinese Civilization, ICA 2008 & 2009, OLKC 2009 and imminent conferences of ICA 2010, OLKC 2010..

The authors welcome comments from readers.

Contact details:

E-mail: xunniedu@gmail.com

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An Empirical Study of Acculturation of Mainland Chinese in Hong Kong

Du Juan
Hong Kong Baptist University

Abstract

This research explores acculturation of mainland Chinese in Hong Kong. Hong Kong shares similar cultural heritage with China but it has a very different social system. Based on the cognitive-affect-behavior framework, this research emphasizes self identification, second language learning, mass media consumption and social network. Characteristics of Chinese communication among different Chinese groups and social systems will be taken into account. This research provides an integrated framework for acculturation and its dynamics

1. Introduction

According to the data from Hong Kong Immigration Department, thousands of migrants came to Hong Kong from mainland China annually since 1983. By the end of 2006, 2,298,956 mainland Chinese migrated to Hong Kong for different purposes, such as marriage, work, business investment etc.¹ The Quality Migrant Admission Scheme was launched by the government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in July 2003. From November 2003 to October 2005, 47972 skilled persons from both mainland China and abroad migrated to Hong Kong, of which 39458 migrated to Hong Kong under the General Employment Policy while 7665 under the Quality Migrant Admission Scheme. According to figures published by the Hong Kong Immigration Department, the number of people who were permitted to work in Hong Kong had increased to 5656 in 2006, and was 1409 in the first three months in 2007.²

Being a colony for over one and a half century under the British rule, Hong Kong is an eclectic convergence of Western and Eastern cultures. The convergence is shown in her history, culture and especially in her unique hybrid colloquial dialect of Cantonese English and Mandarin. English was the official language during the colonial period before 1997. Cantonese is the most commonly used dialect in everyday lives. After China took over Hong Kong in 1997, Cantonese, Mandarin and English are all used in everyday life while Cantonese remains the dominant dialect. Due to the cultural differences between Hong Kong and mainland Chinese caused by

¹ http://news.xinhuanet.com/tai_gang_ao/2005-11/24/content_3828005.htm

² http://www.immd.gov.hk/ehtml/facts_5.htm

one and a half century of different life experiences, Hong Kong and mainland Chinese do not seem to communicate with each other more easily than that between Hong Kong Chinese and Westerners. New migrants from mainland who work in Hong Kong share some common characteristics, i.e., they are well educated and have mastered a special working skill. Most of them, whose native language is non-Cantonese, have to learn the local dialect along with the new hybrid culture.

Most current studies explore the communication differences between Chinese as one cultural group and another cultural group, e.g. American. These studies inevitably assume that Chinese is a homogenous cultural group. However, China is a very large country with diversified regional cultures. The communication among Chinese groups from different social systems and cultural background has not received adequate attention. In the case of Hong Kong, this diversity is even more prominent due to the Western influences under the British rule between 1841 and 1997. This study will explore the process and special characteristics of mainland Chinese migrants as a group in adapting to Hong Kong culture through the analysis of their cultural identification, second dialect acquisition, media consumption and social network.

2. Theoretical framework

Acculturation is often defined as a linear, bi-polar process through which individuals give up their traditional cultural values and weaken their ethnic identities, as they take on the values and behaviors of the dominant social structure (Duan & Vu, 2000). Some scholars define acculturation as a learning process in which individuals adopt attitudes, values, and behaviors from another culture in areas such as language familiarity and usage, cultural heritage, ethnic pride, ethnicity, and interethnic distance (Ownbery & Horridge, 1997; Duan & Vu, 2000). Others define acculturation as the cultural change that is initiated by the conjunction of two or more autonomous cultural systems. It may be the consequence of direct culture transmission or it may be derived from non-cultural causes (Tse & Lee, 1994).

There are many scholars who adopted multifaceted models of acculturation. Dyal and Dyal (1981), for instance, conceptualized the acculturation process as operating on four psychological levels: cultural, ethnic, interpersonal and intrapersonal. Montero (1981) studied changing patterns of acculturation over three generations of Japanese Americans. The result indicated that the third generations of Japanese

Americans are most assimilated to the Anglo-Saxon culture. The third generations of Japanese Americans devote more time to non-Japanese American organizations, have more non-Japanese friends, and are more likely to select a non-Japanese spouse. Studying adaptation of Soviet immigrants in Australia, Taft (1987)'s multifaceted schema identifies five aspects of measuring acculturation – socio-emotional adjustment, national and ethnic identity, cultural competence, social absorption, and role acculturation. Gudykunst and his associates saw the relationship between sojourners/ immigrants and host as parallel to the host-stranger relationship, and concentrated on two psychological factors - uncertainty reduction and anxiety reduction (Gudykunst, 1995). Cui, van den Berg, Sjef, and Jiang (1997), on the other hand, formulated two equation models based on the cognitive-affect-behavior framework, and suggested communication competence, cultural empathy and social interaction as core predictors of cross-cultural adaptation. Kim (e.g., 1977a, 1977b, 1978, 1988) developed several modes of acculturation process based on Korean immigrants' experiences in the United States.

Rather than conceptualizing acculturation as a linear, unidirectional process, Berry (1986) identified that psychological acculturation is associated with different levels of adaptation to the host culture and hence proposed adaptation as a multilinear phenomenon. The adaptation is based on two considerations, first, the extent to which the individual or group feels a sense of identification with the culture of origin; second, the need to relate to the host culture. These two considerations result in four types of results: integration, separation, assimilation and marginalization. Berry's model is different from other models in its examination of subjective acculturation orientation, which may not reflect the level of behavior assimilation. Immigrants who can function effectively in the new environment may still remain their overall subjective identities. In the study of American Indians in Oklahoma, Kim, Lujan, and Dixon (1998) found that none of the 182 interviewees fit into the assimilation or marginalization model. Instead, all the responses of interviewees indicate integration orientation mixed with varying degrees of separation. Moreover, Ma (2000) also noted that intercultural experience is usually a combination of "both-and" and "neither-nor" circumstances. The former is the joy of functioning effectively in dual cultures, while the latter is the agony of being rejected by both old and new culture. Chung (2002) indicated that acculturation modes are not mutually exclusive, and they may change over time and over different period. In his study, Chung (2000) conducted

in-depth interviews on six Chinese Canadians to illustrate the lived worlds of how they negotiate their way in a new society. Chung specifically focused on the four modes of acculturation as depicted by Berry (1986). The result indicates that people adjust to the host culture in different ways.

While most scholars focus on the psychological process of acculturation, some scholars pay special attention to the process of cultural identification change of the new comers in a host culture. Fields (1990) established a general continuum to conceptualize cultural identification. He proposed that generalizations and ethnocultural judgments need to be replaced by an appreciation of the diversity of tribal groups. Several different models have been used to describe the psychological process, social experience, individual challenges and obstacles resulting from multiple cultural influences. One such model is Alternation Model. This model suggests that an individual can alter his or her behavior to fit a particular social context. It assumes that it is possible for an individual to have a sense of belonging in two cultures without compromising the sense of cultural identity. Oetting and Beauvais (1990) described an Orthogonal Model of cultural identification. It offers a portion that allows one culture to remain alive, healthy, and independent of other cultures in the same physical environment. Individuals will be able to choose to develop high levels of cultural identification with any of the many cultures that they are exposed to, depending on their own unique values, needs and abilities. In other models, two or more cultures are often placed in opposition to each other, and individual is required to indicate a preference for one rather than another culture. In this particular theory, cultural identification dimensions are orthogonal to one another; in principle, they are uncorrelated. It suggests that any combination or pattern of cultural identification is possible (Oetting & Beauvais, 1990).

Schumann's acculturation theory (1978) emphasized on the relationship between second language learning and acculturation, as presented in the Pidginization Process: a model for second language acquisition. It predicts that the degree of a learner's success in second language acquisition depends upon the learner's degree of acculturation. The premise behind Schumann's model is that second language acquisition "is one aspect of the general process of acculturation and that the second language learner will be succeed in learning the target language to the degree that they acculturate to the target language group" (Stauble, 1980, P.43). In this model, the main requirement for successful second language acquisition is identification with the

target culture. However, it fails to illustrate how and to what extent these two processes influence each other and what the most important determinant is.

Based on earlier studies of acculturation, this research will explore acculturation of mainland Chinese in Hong Kong, a place with similar cultural heritage but very different social systems. Based on the cognitive-affect-behavior framework, this research emphasizes self identification, second language learning (namely, Cantonese), mass media consumption and social network, and provides an explanation for how these factors play their role in the process of acculturation and how they influence and interact with each other. Specific characteristics of Chinese communication among different Chinese groups and social systems will be taken into consideration.

Research questions will be asked are as follows:

How does the acculturation of mainland immigrants in Hong Kong take place?

- a. How do second language acquisition and the process of acculturation affect each other?
- b. What are the special characteristics of acculturation of immigrants among different Chinese groups and social systems?
- c. How media consumption and social network are related to second language acquisition and acculturation in the host culture?

3. Methodology

Participants

Data used in this study include transcripts from 16 semi-structured interviews by immigrants from mainland to Hong Kong. Immigrants living in Hong Kong less than 7 years³ and who have a proper job in Hong Kong are eligible for this research. Ten of the interviews are conducted by the author and six of the interviews are conducted by the author's three colleagues (who were trained by the author).

Participants in this study were voluntary and they had given informed consent. The interviews were conducted mostly at the interviewee's office and in public places such as café. Three of the interviews were conducted in Cantonese and others in Mandarin. Language used in the interviews was decided by the interviewees. The

³ These new migrants will receive permanent Hong Kong resident IDs after living in Hong Kong for 7 years due to the policies of the Hong Kong special administrative region government.

interviews lasted from fifty minutes to two hours. All were tape-recorded and the verbatim were transcribed. All of the respondents are aged 22 to 35 and they have come to Hong Kong for less than 7 years. Seven of them are females and nine are males. Fourteen of them own a university diploma and two are high school graduates. They work in different industries but their occupation is not being taken into consideration here as it is not a significant contributor in this research.

The interview guide includes questions on second language learning, identification with target culture, social network, media consumption, overall adjustment to or satisfaction with lives in Hong Kong. Both the interviewers and interviewees were allowed to depart from the scripted questions. The semi-structured interview ensured that a consistent format of questions were asked of all participants.

Analysis

Interview transcripts were read in full with Charmaz's (2001) approach in analyzing data. The first step was line-by-line coding of verbatim to delineate the properties of the process of acculturation - what is the cultural identification of the migrants? How do they acquire a second language? What are the facilitating factors and difficulties? How do the migrants intend to use media in the new cultural context? How are their social network and how do they interact with local people? What are the most crucial elements during this process? Why are these elements regarded as important? How do these elements play the role in the process of acculturation? The second step took the form of comparative analysis of the differences of individual cultural identification and self-preference of second language acquisition in terms of mass media consumption and social network. How do the differences of media consumption and social network influence cultural identification and the process of acculturation? The third step involves focus coding and memo writing of the emerging themes. How second language acquisition, media consumption and social interaction play their roles in the process of acculturation?

4. Results

4.1 Second Language acquisition

Hong Kong Cantonese is originated from Canton or Guangzhou which is one of the nine main regional dialects of China. New immigrants easily give themselves away by the “foreignness” in their accent as they speak Cantonese. Hong Kong Cantonese is characterized by mixing many English and quasi-English words in the spoken language. Hong Kong Cantonese distincts itself from Cantonese prevalent in Guangzhou and other areas. One of the great difficulties in learning Hong Kong Cantonese is to learn how to mix English and quasi-English words with Chinese words properly in a given situation. As a respondent puts it:

I don't think I speak like a Hong Kong person even after I have learned how to speak Cantonese fluently. Hong Kong people always like to use some English words in their dialect. It is a little strange for me to speak like that. I don't speak like that. En, I feel that I am a Chinese, rather than a Hong Kong person (F, 23, for 6 years)

In fact, some immigrants who could speak fluent Cantonese still feel a language barrier to some extent because of the mixing of English/quasi-English words with Chinese in Hong Kong Cantonese. It is not just a way of choosing one word over another. This mixing has changed the logical structure of the language. Further, it represents the built-in western elements of Hong Kong culture. As mentioned in the above quote, speaking a hybrid language implies an acceptance of the western cultural elements. Hence, the difficulty in learning how to mix Chinese with English/quasi-English words implies significance in two levels, i.e., the technical level and the cultural level.

Besides difficulties in second language acquisition, individuals' intention of learning play an important role in the process of learning Cantonese, which will affect the result of learning directly. English is the required working language in most universities, research institutes and foreign corporations in Hong Kong nowadays. In most departments of Hong Kong government, English is the required written language. Due to the pressure and impence of applying working visa, English is more important than Cantonese as far as securing a job in a large corporation is concerned.

In fact, I don't want to spend a lot of time to learn Cantonese. What I need to learn and to improve is my spoken English. For Cantonese, I think it is better to have, as a bonus, but I still could live a comfortable life without speaking Cantonese. I have a lot to do but very little time, so I don't want to spend too much time on learning Cantonese. (C, 25, for two years)

Clearly, the practical need in everyday life is the most important motivation for a new immigrant to learn the local colloquial language. However, Mandarin plays a more and more crucial role in Hong Kong public communication, service industry and everyday life after the government of China took over Hong Kong in 1997. The following quote elaborates this point:

In this situation, I feel that it is the duty of Hong Kong people to learn how to speak fluent Mandarin rather than my duty to speak Cantonese. Most of my Hong Kong friends who speak Mandarin are well trained by me. (D, 25, for two years)

In most business and public occasions, Hong Kong employees can speak fluent Mandarin, which makes communication easier between new Chinese immigrants and local Hong Kong people. It seems that the necessity of learning Cantonese gradually decreases. Although speaking the local dialect does help the acculturation of new immigrants, it is no longer the most significant factor in this context.

4.2 Cultural identification

Hong Kong and mainland China share similar cultural heritage. However, due to the divergent historical development in the past one hundred and fifty years, people in Hong Kong and mainland China possess distinct social identities and may even have conflicting worldviews, values, ideologies, and social experiences. Most of the immigrants are well educated and master professional skills in their homeland before immigrating to Hong Kong. They have already formed their own cultural identification based on their cultural background and life experiences. After entering Hong Kong society, they are exposed to the Hong Kong culture and they start to learn Cantonese and interact with Hong Kong people. During the process, will their cultural identification change? If so, how will their cultural identification change? The following quote is typical among our respondents:

Some of my friends think that I behave like a local Hong Kong person, but I don't think I am a local Hong Kong person to some extent. Or I should say, deep down I don't feel I am a Hong Kong person. The core of culture is one's thinking and one's psychological state. Compared with Hong Kong people, my lifestyle is more like that of a mainland Chinese which emphasizes on GUANXI. It is not that I don't agree with the thinking pattern of Hong Kong people, just because I don't like it. (A, 29, for six years)

Clearly, many of the immigrants held high cultural identifications with their host culture. They believe that their cultural identifications with the host culture will not change easily. In the meanwhile, some immigrants' cultural identifications gradually change in the process of communication and interactions with local Hong Kong people. They gradually perceive themselves as part of Hong Kong society. However, this process of change occurs over a long period of time, and there are no clear boundaries in this process. As the process takes place, both the original identification of a mainland Chinese and the new cultural identification of a Hong Kong person coexist, therefore, the cultural identification of the new immigrant is ambiguous. It is not unusual that while one cultural identification is manifested in one occasion, another is manifested in another occasion. At other times, both cultural identifications are manifested in sequence or even at the same time. The following quote illustrates this point:

I am not very clear about my cultural identity. On one hand, I am still a mainland Chinese, no matter how long I have lived in Hong Kong. In fact, in most cases, I still think that I am different from local Hong Kong people, because I originally came from mainland China. On the other hand, I feel like I am Hong Kong people, because I live in Hong Kong and lead a similar life as local Hong Kong people. When I talk with a mainland Chinese, he most likely treats me as Hong Kong people, rather than a mainland Chinese. (D, 25, for two years)

4.3 Future expectation

Most immigrants who work in Hong Kong are over age twenty. They are either married with children or at marriage age. Their expectations of their children embody their ideas about the importance of learning second language, which is shown in the following quote:

If I had a kid, I will let him or her learn Chinese first. Being a Chinese, the Chinese language is the most important thing to learn. Then it should be English, because English is the main tool to communicate with foreigners. If my kid could learn Cantonese, that's ok. I think mastering a language is easier for kids than adults. (I, 26, for three years)

Influenced by Chinese culture and history, most respondents believe that Chinese is the most important language for their children to learn; English the second. None of them see Cantonese as their children's first choice. They all hold the belief that Chinese will play a more and more important role in everyday life in Hong Kong in the future. This point, to some extent, reflects their strong cultural identifications with mainland Chinese culture.

4.4 Mass media (TV) consumption

Mass media is booming in Hong Kong where the media environment is very open and free to allow the existence of multiple voices. Not a single individual living in Hong Kong could avoid the exposure to the mass media, namely, TV, in this research. Moreover, new immigrants try to learn more about the local people and society through mass media which is easily accessible and convenient. Mass media opens the door for new immigrants to learn about Hong Kong's culture and society. This idea is shared among our respondents:

When I first arrived in Hong Kong, I was not as busy as nowadays. I spent a lot of time watching TV, and I found that TV is very useful in helping me to know more about Hong Kong. It makes me feel closer to Hong Kong local people. (H, 26, for three years)

As elaborated by most respondents, mass media, namely TV in this research, provides new immigrants a convenient and easy way to learn more about Hong Kong within a short period of time. Nowadays, many TV programs in Cantonese are broadcasted with Chinese subtitles in Hong Kong, which provide convenient and helpful tools for new immigrants to learn Cantonese. Immigrants could practice their listening skills while watching TV programs. However, the benefits of watching TV for language learning are showed in the early period of language learning. That is to say, new immigrants could learn the meanings and pronunciations of new words through TV programs, but it is of little help for them to practice their spoken language.

With the subtitles of TV program, I could practice my pronunciation, but it is not that easy. For speaking a dialect, if you don't have the chance to talk to others, your pronunciation may be not clear enough for others to understand. Only by talking to others would one know the weakness of his/her pronunciation. (D, 25, for two years)

Although TV helps one to learn Cantonese pronunciation and vocabulary, in the multi-culture and multi-linguistic context, the decline in the popularity of Cantonese TV dramas influences migrants' choices of watching TV. As more and more people prefer watching English or Korean or Japanese TV dramas, the decline in popularity of Cantonese TV dramas in Hong Kong society may explain why Cantonese TV dramas do not play an important role as before. The following account by a respondent vividly shows that migrants' TV consumption is influenced by social context and fashion.

My friends all asked me to watch TV to practice my spoken Cantonese, but I don't like watching Hong Kong TV drama. If I could have more choices, I would watch more Japanese and Korean TV dramas which are more popular these days. (H, 25, for one year)

To conclude, to most respondents, the consumption of mass media, namely TV, is a helpful tool for them to learn second language at the early period of language learning, with a focus on pronunciation and new words. However, the role of mass media is not as important as expected.

4.5 Social network

It is interesting to find that participants who have a broader social network with local Hong Kong people are more successful in second language learning. The mastery of fluent Cantonese is highly related to social networks, e.g. friends. Among the participants of this research, participant A and C have become Christians after they came to Hong Kong. They usually go to church and take part in religious activities and have made more local Hong Kong friends. Consequently, they are more fluent in spoken Cantonese.

What is most interesting is that, participants whose native language is Cantonese also strongly support the above discussion. Participant J, who was born in Canton province and was graduated from Zhejiang University, made her most intimate friends there. Therefore, she has a high cultural identification with Chinese culture and Mandarin. The following quote elaborates her point:

“Because my best friends all speak Mandarin, although I am in Hong Kong, I think I speak Mandarin more often than Cantonese. What’s more, Mandarin is the language which I could express my deep feelings in my heart. It seems that Mandarin is more intimate and important for me than Cantonese.” (J, 25, for one year)

On the other hand, communicate and interact with local people as much as possible would be a very effective way for a newcomer to adapt to the local culture and society. Immigrants who have made more local friends are easier to adapt as suggested by the following respondent:

Local friends will introduce you to some interesting places where you will never find out by yourself. For example, my friends brought me to a large stall. When I got there, I was scared by the environment, but my friends told me that it was fine. They introduced me many interesting things and the history of Hong Kong. So I think that if you want to assimilate in a society within a short period of time, the most effective way is to know as many local people as possible. (K, 24, for two years)

Interacting with local people helps immigrants to eliminate psychological distance in a new society. This point is supported by most respondents. Compared with a virtual world represented in mass media, especially TV, real life experiences and communication in society provide immigrants real acknowledgement and feelings about the society.

Most immigrants understand the importance of communication with local people. However, it is difficult for them to put it into practice. This is partly explained by the fact that most immigrants are working under great pressure and their social network is very limited. For them, interactions with most locals begin in their work environment. It is hard for them to express life feelings and personal emotions to colleagues. Moreover, due to the limitations of the living environment of the immigrants, they are more likely to communicate with people from a similar social class. For example, people from white-collar class are more likely to know more people in the same social class. This situation is common among our respondents:

It is because we have little chance to meet people from different social class, especially the lower class. (H, 25, for one year)

It is the fact of life that we don't have time to build friendship or personal relationship with the local Hong Kong people. Friendships at work are different from friendships in universities. To build new friendship you need to spend a lot of time keeping it. (G, 25, for four years)

Clearly, due to work pressure and limited resources, it is hard for immigrants to interact with local people and play roles in public affairs. What is more, due to different educational and cultural backgrounds, different experiences and living environment, the interests and attention of immigrants are different from the local people. The difference in interest do not only influence immigrants' familiarities of the local society, but also their involvement in society and public affairs.

For example, the removing of Tianxing harbor has caused many local people to fight against the government, and they showed their sadness of it. I could not understand this collective concern without having lived in this society for a long enough time. (B, 24, for three years)

5. Discussion

5.1 Second language acquisition and acculturation

The process of second language learning could facilitate the process of acculturation. As proved by earlier research, the mastery of a second language within a short period of time was positively related to the adaptation to a new culture. This point is supported by this research. Language is originated from a certain cultural context, and is closely related to regional history and culture. Therefore, learning a second language does not only help one to understand the regional culture and customs, but also makes one to feel more closely to the local environment psychologically.

Further, this research indicates that the outcome of second language learning does not necessarily influence acculturation. Speaking fluent Cantonese does not necessarily help individuals to adapt to a new cultural environment directly. This research indicates that the intention and subjectivities of individuals have a close relationship with the mastery of a second language. To some immigrants, second language is seen as a tool for work and living; they prefer to express their true feeling and private life with their mother tongue. Therefore, the mastery of a second language does not necessarily lead to intimate cultural identification psychologically.

This result explains the research of Schumann (1978) from a different perspective. Schumann predicts that the degree of a learner's success in second language acquisition depends upon the learners' degree of acculturation. This research further explores that the intention of second language learning plays crucial roles in the process of acculturation, and the mastery of second language does not relate to acculturation directly.

5.2 Cultural identification and second language acquisition

Most of the participants have more complexed and multiple-layered cultural identifications. Some hold high identifications with Chinese culture and weak identifications with Hong Kong culture. Some hold high identifications with Hong Kong culture, while admitting that Hong Kong culture is originated from Chinese culture and features openness and diversity. Only one respondent believes that Hong Kong culture is mostly influenced by western culture, and holds a high identification with the western culture.

The result has proved the orthogonal model which indicates that any combination or pattern of cultural identification is possible. Specifically, a person may have a single cultural identity, may be bicultural, may have a high identification with one culture and a modest one with another, or may have a weak identification with any culture (Oetting & Beauvais, 1990).

What is more, immigrants' cultural identifications could shift from situation to situation, rather than being stable and predictable in a given context. In other words, their cultural identifications have not been completely reconstructed. Instead, it is the dynamic nature of their identification that plays a key role in their adaptations.

5.3 Media consumption and second language acquisition

Scholars have long found that mass media consumption affects acculturation. Graves (1967) and Nagata (1969) regarded owning a television as an effective factor of acculturation. Defleur & Cho (1957) explored the function of broadcast in the process of acculturation. Kim (1977a, 1979, 1990) continually focuses on the usage and tendency of U.S.A. mass media used by Asian immigrants in the U.S.A. Reece & Palmgreen (1996), Stilling (1997) Chaffee, Nass & Yang (1989) stated that, mass media usage in host culture is positively related to the adapting to new culture and acculturation. Kim (e.g., 1977a, 1977b, 1978, 1988) has developed several models of

acculturation process based on Korean immigrants' experiences in the United States. In her models, interpersonal communication and mass media consumption, which are mediated by host environmental conditions and individual adaptive predisposition, directly influence adaptation outcomes, though the acculturative function of interpersonal communication was found stronger than that of media consumption. This research supports the idea that mass media consumption plays crucial roles in the process of acculturation. Moreover, this research finds that the effect of mass media, namely TV, mainly embodies in the early period of second language learning and its effect is not as strong as people would have imagined.

5.4 Social network and acculturation

Individuals interact with the society mainly through exchanges with small-scale surroundings, e.g., colleagues, friends and familiars. This is especially true for new immigrants who live with limited resource and under high working pressure, and have little time and energy to widely extend their social network. Most immigrants restrict their social network with mainland Chinese, and maintain their social network in their host culture. When they encounter personal problems and wish to talk to others, they always go to their old friends who live in mainland China, although they admit that their old friends are not familiar with their new living environments. Only one respondent would like to talk with local friends about personal matters. Therefore, social interaction does not help these new migrants to adapt to the new culture and society mainly due to the fact that most immigrants lack broad social network in host culture.

As indicated by the discussion above, due to the high working pressure in Hong Kong, immigrants' interaction with the new society is very low. This impedes their familiarities of the new environment as well as adaptation to the new culture and society.

Immigrants who are engaged in supportive exchange networks with local people provide meaningful frameworks within which they could assess and acquire appropriate behaviors both linguistically and culturally, effectively reducing their cultural distance. Meanwhile people who are left outside of these networks or whose needs are not met by the host culture will not effectively adapt to the new culture. The findings of this study are consistent with Schumann's acculturation with successful second language acquisition.

5.5 Other elements

Some other factors show apparent effect on the process of acculturation besides the factors discussed above. They are education background, cultural background, social states and so on. These are beyond the topic of this research.

Moreover, we find that whether the mother culture and the host culture are homogeneous or heterogeneous or not have direct influence on the process of acculturation. As far as mainland Chinese immigrants are concerned, similar origination and heritage of the mother culture and the host culture make the immigrants feel close to the host culture more easily. Meanwhile, it is the similar cultural origination that impedes the new immigrants' cultural identification of Hong Kong, which hold a strong cultural identification of their mother culture.

As far as mainland Chinese immigrants are concerned, working environment and quality of life are closely related to one's education background and embody their social states apparently. The respondents of this research holds working visa due to their high education and mastery of professional skills. Therefore, it seems more likely for them to show diverse cultural identification.

Moreover, individual characteristics and subjective psychology have direct influence on individuals' familiarities and subjective perception of the host culture. As a result, they further affect the process of acculturation.

6. Conclusion

This study explains some major factors and the dynamics of the process of acculturation. The interactions between media consumption, social network and their effects on second language acquisition have been elaborated in this study. The social context in this article shows some special characteristics which is the nature of Hong Kong culture and history, with regards to both language and social network.

Although there are many additional variables that could be examined in the living of the immigrants, their consumption of the mass media and their social network clearly affect their second language acquisition and cultural identification. This research elaborates this dynamics and provides an integrated framework for acculturation research.

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